

Tom Harbour Biography

Tom is a recognized expert in wildland fire and aviation management policy and operations. His successful and notable tenure as National Director of Fire and Aviation Management (National Fire Chief) included unmatched service length. The US Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management program employs over 10,000 firefighters and responds to a variety of domestic emergencies, primarily fire. In the last year of his active duty with the agency, the program had a budget of nearly \$4 billion (US). The US Forest Service program was the world's largest organization of wildland firefighters as well as the world's largest federal civilian (non-defense) aviation program. Through both direct international relationships and interaction with USAID (United States Agency for International Development), he provided assistance to every region of the world. He effectively dealt with senior elected officials and governmental leaders at the local, state, and federal level. He also successfully dealt with career professionals both domestically and internationally. During his tenure, Tom brought additional professionalism and enhanced performance to the organization. The US Forest Service fire and aviation program was the preeminent federal wildland fire program.

Tom's first experience with wildfire was firefighting in central California in 1970. Since then, Tom has been energetically and continuously involved in wildland fire and aviation management. Tom has had opportunities to fight, prescribe, and manage wildland fires across the United States and internationally. He has been a Burn Boss (for prescribed/managed wildland fire), an Incident Commander, and an Area Commander (both for wildfires) at the highest levels of complexity. His emergency management experiences have included fires, hurricanes, earthquakes, riots, floods, and other types of disasters (for example, cryptosporidium outbreaks) both domestically and internationally. He was the first National Fire Chief with this extensive operational background.

Tom has a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of California at Davis and a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Management from Washington State University. He graduated summa cum laude from the University of California at Davis and with Presidential Honors (for a 4.0 GPA) from Washington State University. His post-graduate work includes studies at the JFK School of Government, Harvard University and the Kenan-Flagler School of Business at the University of North Carolina. Tom served with faculty and leaders at the Marine Corps University, Quantico, Virginia.

Since retiring, Tom started a small business HarbourFire (harbourfire.com)

Tom has been happily married for over 40 years, and is a proud father and grandfather.